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CHINA'S CIVIL DEFENSE PROGRAM

1. China's extensive civil defense shelter program began in earnest in about 1960, peaked in the late Sixties and early Seventies, and continues today.
2. Shelters provide protection from air and missile attack and would be used to defend cities from invading armies. Shelters also boost civilian morale. Chinese use visits by foreigners and public media to impress upon potential adversaries that China as a nation could survive even a nuclear attack.
3. Large and medium cities in China have elaborate underground shelters, and most towns and villages have at least some trenching. Shelters range from simple trenches to elaborate complexes with tunnels several miles long equipped with electric generators, food and sanitary facilities, and air filtration systems. The most sophisticated complex is in Luta.
4. The civil defense program probably is the joint responsibility of the Ministries of National Defense and Public Security. Local civil officials also have a role.
5. China's shelters probably provide reasonably good protection from nuclear blast for the Chinese population living in urban areas. This segment includes most of China's important governmental, industrial, and scientific workers. Success of shelters depends on adequate warning of attack--Chinese radars provide from 2 to 9 minutes of warning of Soviet missile attack. Protection afforded by shelters from radiation is not known. We do not know if air filter sysyms are adequate or how much food and other essentials are stockpiled in the shelters.
6. Foreign VIP visitors are often shown shelter complexes as a pillar of Chinese defense, but Chinese military delegations visiting abroad seldom pursue acquisition of foreign civil defense information and technology. Chinese delegations to France and Switzerland this fall focused on conventional military hardware and technology, not civil defense.

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CHINA'S CIVIL DEFENSE PROGRAM

I. China has one of the most extensive civil defense shelter programs in the world. Some shelters were constructed as far back as the Fifties, but the civil defense program evidently began in earnest about 1960 as part of a much broader campaign to "prepare against war."

- A. The program peaked during the late 1960s and early 1970s under the impetus of the border clashes with the Soviets in 1969 and in response to the US bombing campaign in neighboring North Vietnam.
- B. The Chinese are continuing to build shelters for both their civil and military population, but at a more measured pace.

II. In addition to their obvious function for protection from missile and air attack, the shelters provide relatively secure bases from which the Chinese can fight to defend urban areas against the follow-on invasion they evidently expect.

- A. Shelter construction has also been used as a means of boosting the morale of the civil population against the threat of attack by technically superior enemies.

B. The Chinese have gone out of their way to permit foreigners, including senior US Government officials and newsmen, to inspect some of their extensive shelter complexes. This apparently is an attempt to convince potential enemies that large parts of China's population could survive a nuclear attack and defend against an enemy invasion.

III. Most, if not all, of China's large and medium-size cities have some form of underground shelters, and many small towns and villages have at least rudimentary shelters.

A. The Chinese have installed basement shelters within commercial and government buildings. They have also built shelters using a cut-and-cover technique employing pre-cast concrete sections layed along extensive trenching.

B. The most extensive and secure shelters have been built in large cities and near important industrial installations to protect key government, industrial, and military personnel.

1. The size and facilities of these complexes vary, but those in Peking and other major cities reportedly have tunnels several miles

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long that are equipped with electric generators, sanitary facilities, food preparation areas, and air filtration systems.

2. The most sophisticated underground complex is in the port city of Luta which is reported to have concrete-lined tunnels wide enough to handle trucks. The Chinese claim that Luta has sufficient underground facilities to hold all of its one million inhabitants.

IV. The shelters, and probably the entire civil defense effort, is believed to be the responsibility of the Ministry of National Defense or the Ministry of Public Security.

A. The Ministry of National Defense provides warning of attack and essential communications. Local and militia forces probably have a primary role in conjunction with local civil organs in implementing civil defense measures.

1. PLA construction expertise and engineering resources were used to build some of the more extensive shelter complexes, including the Peking subway complex.

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2. Provincial military and civil authorities probably are responsible for supervising local shelter construction and establishing emergency stockpiles of food and medical supplies.

B. The Ministry of Public Security role is less well defined, but its responsibilities of maintaining local security and public order would probably become more important during a wartime emergency.

V. The effectiveness of China's shelter program obviously depends on the size and intensity of the attack.

A. Only about 15 percent of China's population resides in urban areas, but this group includes most of its important governmental, industrial, and scientific personnel. They would have a good chance of surviving the blast effects of a nuclear strike, if they received adequate warning.

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2. China's network of ballistic missile warning radars could provide as much as nine minutes warning of attack.

B. The capability of the Chinese civil defense shelters to protect the population from the longer term hazard of radiation is not known.

1. Although some stockpiling of essentials in shelters has been reported, we do not know the scope of this effort nor how long the inhabitants could endure.

VI. Although the Chinese frequently invite distinguished foreign visitors to view their underground shelters, there is little evidence that Chinese military delegations visiting the West pursue civil defense matters.

A. Two Chinese military delegations recently visited Western Europe, for example, but their interests were primarily in conventional military hardware and technology. The delegation sent to Switzerland ostensibly to discuss civil defense matters probably was interested in acquiring Oerlikon anti-aircraft guns and production technology.

B. A more prestigious Chinese delegation headed by Deputy Chief of Staff Yang-chen Wu recently visited France in return for a visit by French Chief of Staff

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Guy Mery last year. The Chinese visited French army, navy, and air force units and observed exercises and inspected equipment.

1. This was the most senior major military delegation to visit a Western country, but there was no indication of interest by the Chinese in other than purely military forces, equipment, and techniques.

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